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ABSTRACT

The 1989 New York City Pupils with Compensatory Educational Needs (PCEN) Summer Remediation Program met or exceeded each of its objectives. The program comprised basic skills and English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) courses, serving 12,785 students in 880 classes in the regular high schools and an unspecified number of students at 73 off-site facilities. Participants were either taking a course they had previously failed; or had failed a Regents Competency Test (RCT) in reading, writing, or mathematics; or had fallen below the State Reference Point on the Degrees of Reading Power (DRP) Test. All classes were composed of 25 students or less. Evaluation information was gathered from staff interviews, classroom observations, and statistical data on the number of courses passed and the number of RCTs passed by participants. Sixty-three percent of the participants in the regular school courses passed at least one course, and 50 percent of the participants taking an RCT passed the exam. Students scored above the stated objective on the writing RCT and below the stated objective on the reading and mathematics RCTs. Quantitative data on the performance of participants served by off-site facilities were not available. Recommendations for improvement include compilation of statistical data on the performance of participants served by off-site facilities and inclusion of science and social studies courses in future programs. Statistical data are presented in two tables. (FMW)

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OREA Report

PUPILS WITH COMPENSATORY EDUCATIONAL NEEDS (P.C.E.N.)
SUMMER REMEDIATION PROGRAM
1989
END OF YEAR REPORT

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PUPILS WITH COMPENSATORY EDUCATIONAL NEEDS (P.C.E.N.) SUMMER REMEDIATION PROGRAM 1989 END OF YEAR REPORT

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 1989, the P.C.E.N. Summer Remediation Program funded instructional lines for basic skills courses serving 12,785 students in 880 classes in the regular high schools, and an unspecified number of students at 73 offsite facilities. This report describes the administration and structure of this program, staff perceptions, classroom observations, and two quantitative measures of the program's success at meeting its objectives.

PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

The program funded basic skills courses comprised solely of students who had previously failed these courses, R.C.T. preparation courses in reading, writing and mathematics, and English as a Second Language (E.S.L.) courses offered through the Institute for Career Exploration (ICE) at regular high schools. In addition, basic skills courses offered through Auxiliary Services for High Schools (ASHS), Offsite Educational Services (O.E.S.) and Project Outreach were funded. All funded courses met the reduced class size criterion of 25 students or less.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

The purpose of the program was to provide intensive and individualized teaching services to students who are eligible for P.C.E.N. funds. Students are eligible if they are taking a course they have previously failed, or if they have failed an R.C.T. in reading, writing or mathematics, or if they fall below the Statewide Reference Point on the Degrees of Reading Power (D.R.P.) test.

The program objectives were that:

- In all P.C.E.N. Summer Remediation Programs, 50 percent of all students completing the summer school program will pass at least one P.C.E.N.-funded course in which they are enrolled; and

- Fifty percent of all students taking a Regents Competency Test will pass the exam.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The P.C.E.N. Summer Remediation Program provided funding for 12,785 (19 percent) of the 60,958 students who attended summer school at regular high schools in 1989, and an additional unspecified number of students at 73 offsite facilities. The funding of E.S.L. courses at the regular high schools, and basic skills courses at offsite facilities constituted a major expansion of the range of funded programs from the previous year.

State regulations, and resulted in an increase in the total dollars applied to the program.

The program met or exceeded each of its objectives. Sixty-three percent of students enrolled in P.C.E.N.-funded courses passed at least one course, and 50 percent of students taking an R.C.T. passed the exam. Students scored above the stated objective on the writing R.C.T. and below it on the reading and math R.C.T.s. Quantitative data on courses passed and R.C.T. scores were not available for students served at offsite facilities.

On the basis of this evaluation OREA offers the following recommendations:

- Quantitative data on courses passed and R.C.T. scores for students attending funded classes at offsite facilities should be compiled separately so that the efficacy of the program can be assessed;

- Program planners should pursue the argument that R.C.T. preparation classes in science and social studies be considered basic skills classes, and thus eligible for P.C.E.N. funding;

- Special attention should be focused on increasing the percentage of students who pass R.C.T.s in reading and mathematics;

- The Division of High Schools should work with the State Education Department to facilitate the reporting of writing R.C.T. scores; and

- Ideas about how to address the needs of students who cannot benefit from the program because of the rapid pace of the summer curriculum should be explored.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report was written by the Office of Research, Evaluation, and Assessment's High School Evaluation Unit (OREA/H.S.E.U.). A special note of thanks to Dr. Ronnie Halperin for coordinating the overall evaluation, and for interprting the data and writing the final report and to Mabel Payne for supervisory assistance, Jan Rosenblum for data analysis, and Jose Rivera for word processing.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

		Page
	EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	
	ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	
I.	INTRODUCTION	1
	Program Background	1
	Program Objectives	5
	Evaluation Methodology	5
	Scope of This Report	6
II.	PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION	7
	Program Administration	7
	Program Structure	8
	Program Description	10
III.	STUDENT OUTCOMES	14
	Courses Grades	14
	R.C.T.s	14
IV.	CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	18

List of Figures

Table		Page
1	Number of Courses Passed by Students in P.C.E.N.-Funded Courses	15
2	Number and Percent of Students Passing R.C.T.s	16

I. INTRODUCTION

Pupils with Compensatory Educational Needs (P.C.E.N.) provides New York State funding for remediation in reading and writing for high school students through the English Instructional Services (E.I.S.) program, mathematics through the Math Skills program, and English language instruction for students with limited English proficiency (LEP) through the English as a Second Language (E.S.L.) program. The P.C.E.N. Summer Remediation Program extends the funding of these basic skills courses to summer school. It is intended to offer more individualized and intensive instruction to students who are repeating a course, improving basic skills, or receiving remediation in order to take a Regents Competency Test (R.C.T.) which they have previously failed. Of the 24,246 places occupied by students who were attending regular summer high school for these purposes, 14,618 (60 percent) were funded by P.C.E.N. In all, 880 summer school classes in the regular high schools and, for the first time, basic skills courses offered at 73 offsite facilities were P.C.E.N.-funded.

PROGRAM BACKGROUND

Historically, the Office of Summer and Evening High Schools has administered all summer school programs that take place in the high schools. As of the summer of 1988, it administered most of the sub-programs, many of which were offered at non-instructional sites as well. These include programs such as

Offsite Educational Services* (O.E.S.) and New York Vocational Training Centers** (V.T.C.), both of which are offered at non-instructional sites, and the Institute for Career Exploration*** (ICE), which is offered at regular high schools. As of the summer of 1989, this office also took responsibility for administering Auxiliary Services for High Schools (ASHS)****, an offsite program that prepares students for the General Educational Diploma (G.E.D.) Test.

In all these special programs, as well as in the regular high schools, instructional lines for basic skills courses may be funded by P.C.E.N. if they meet the reduced class size criterion of 25 students or less, and if they are comprised solely of students who meet P.C.E.N. funding guidelines. A student may be eligible for funding if he/she has scored two or more years below the statewide reference point on a Degrees of Reading Power (D.R.P.) test or an R.C.T. in reading, writing or mathematics, or failed an R.C.T. for that course.***** If students meeting these

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*This alternative program for high school age students was offered at 32 sites throughout the city during the 1989 Summer School season.

**This program served Special Education students at 24 sites during the 1989 Summer School season.

***This summer remediation program for incoming ninth and tenth graders was offered at 52 high schools during the 1989 Summer School season.

****This program was offered at 17 sites throughout the city during the 1989 Summer School season.

*****See the 1988 P.C.E.N. Summer Remediation Program report for specific criteria.

criteria are served, then students who have failed two or more courses, and are repeating a course they have failed, are also eligible.

The Office of Summer and Evening High Schools administers P.C.E.N. funds for summer school. This Office faces a difficult administrative challenge, in that precise head counts, and consequently course designations, are not available until the day that summer school begins. For the summer of 1989, the P.C.E.N. Summer Remediation Program funded basic skills courses in regular high schools, E.S.L. courses offered through ICE, and basic skills courses offered through O.E.S., Project Outreach, and two components of ASHS.

O.E.S. is an alternative program that offers a flexible individualized course of study to help students overcome specific, previously diagnosed deficits. It serves students up to the age of 21, who have previously dropped out of high school. The students may either complete diploma requirements at O.E.S., or they may elect to return to a regular high school setting after spending some time in the program.

Project Outreach offers English and mathematics courses which provide remediation within the context of the regular course curriculum. It serves dropouts who are resuming their high school education and other high risk students, all of whom have previously failed two or more courses required for graduation, are overage and are lacking in credit accumulation for their age and grade.

The Basic Skills component of ASHS provides intensive remediation in reading, writing and mathematics, for returning dropouts who are overage or lack sufficient credit accumulation for their grade to make returning to school a realistic goal. The basic skills instruction they receive is intended to prepare them to enter a G.E.D. program. The program employs mainly individualized or small group instruction, and meaningful subject matter in an attempt to help students succeed.

The Job Training Partnership Act (J.T.P.A.) component of ASHS conducts basic skills courses, as part of a collaborative effort with the Department of Employment. ASHS provides the basic education courses, while Testing, Assessment and Placement (TAP) centers and community-based organizations (C.B.O.s) provide pre-employment/work maturity and job training.

In 1989, 66,554 students attended regular summer high schools.* Nineteen percent of these students attended at least one course funded by P.C.E.N. In addition, an unspecified number of students attending offsite facilities were served by funded courses. Some of the important changes that were instituted in the 1989 P.C.E.N. Summer Remediation Program were that funds were used for E.S.L. classes and for basic skills instruction at offsite facilities. Since ASHS was administered by the Office of Summer and Evening High Schools, it too was a recipient of P.C.E.N. funds. Forty-nine teaching lines serving 766 students were funded by P.C.E.N. through ASHS alone. Moreover, classes to

*This includes 5,596 students who participated in ICE.

be funded by P.C.E.N. were determined early in the summer. As a consequence of these changes, a broader range of programs was funded, and the total funding package for summer school was increased.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

The stated objectives of the P.C.E.N. Summer Remediation Program were:

- In all P.C.E.N. Summer Remediation Programs, 50 percent of all students completing the summer school program will pass at least one P.C.E.N.-funded course in which they are enrolled; and
- Fifty percent of all students taking a Regents Competency Test will pass the examination.

EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

Data for the quantitative component of this evaluation consisted of the number of courses passed and the number of R.C.T.s passed by program participants at regular high school sites. To conduct the qualitative component, evaluation consultants from OREA visited 10 summer school programs. The sample sites included schools in all five boroughs, and regular as well as offsite programs. Evaluators visited four regular high schools, Grover Cleveland, Louis Brandeis, Seward Park, and Boys and Girls High Schools, and one alternative high school, West Side Alternative High School. The five offsite programs visited were the Roberto Clemente Learning Center and the TAP 10 Center administered by ASHS, the Promesa and Richmond O.E.S. program sites and the Bedford-Stuyvesant Outreach program site. At each site, the consultant interviewed the program supervisor,

observed one funded class and distributed a teacher questionnaire to two teachers of funded classes. The goals of the site visits were to develop a sense of how the P.C.E.N.-funded program fits into the larger summer school program, to compare P.C.E.N.-funded classes in summer school to those offered during the regular school year, to assess the staff's perception of students in funded classes, and to determine what, if any impact P.C.E.N. funding has on the way courses are taught.

SCOPE OF THIS REPORT

Chapter II, which evaluates program implementation, describes the administrative structure of P.C.E.N.-funded summer school and offers a description of the program based on the site visits. Chapter III, which reports on outcomes, evaluates the extent to which the program met its stated objectives, and Chapter IV offers conclusions and recommendations based on the program implementation and outcomes.

II. PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

Announcement of the 1989 summer school program, and information about its administrative structure and procedures was distributed to high school superintendents and principals in High School Memorandum #139, dated May 12, 1989. It included the designated summer school sites, the supervisors, assistants and guidance counselors assigned to each site, feeder school patterns, procedures for registration, conditions of enrollment and special conditions. In 1989, summer school classes were held on Monday through Thursday, from July 5 to August 15. As in the past, students had to receive special permission to enroll in three classes.

Although the list of sites at which summer school classes are to be held is generated before summer school starts, it sometimes needs to be modified on the first day of summer school. Classes at some offsite programs may be canceled if too few students show up at a particular site. In some cases, where small numbers of students are served throughout the year, the Principal of Summer and Evening High Schools may decide to keep a center operating with a low summer enrollment. The decision to cancel classes at an offsite facility because of low enrollment must be weighed against the importance of providing continuity of service for students in the program.

In 1989, the Principal of Summer and Evening High Schools made a concerted effort to designate instructional lines funded

by P.C.E.N. early in the summer. Several obstacles stood in the way of complete compliance. First, precise head counts at each site are unknown until the first day of classes. Second, the number of students who will enroll in courses eligible for funding is unknown until the first day of classes. Third, students taking courses to advance, rather than because they had previously failed them cannot be included under P.C.E.N. funding requirements. Whether a particular class contains any such students is unknown until the day classes begin. Finally, there was uncertainty from higher administrative levels as to whether R.C.T. preparation courses other than reading writing and mathematics (e.g., science) would be eligible for funding.

In an attempt to improve compliance, the Office of Summer and Evening High Schools made more informed (and therefore more precise) projections about which classes would be eligible for P.C.E.N. funding before the start of the summer program. In addition, they developed new reporting procedures to permit final determination of which classes were eligible for funding shortly after the program began. As a result of these efforts, in 1989, most designations for P.C.E.N. funding were made in advance, and all designations were finalized three weeks after summer school began.

PROGRAM STRUCTURE

Summer school classes are bound to a uniform curriculum, exam schedule, and class meeting time schedule. It is mandatory that all courses be scheduled for sessions lasting a multiple of

90 minutes. Thus, a typical class session lasts 90 minutes, but some courses, such as Chemistry 1 and 2, may meet for 180-minute sessions. In addition, teachers must be licensed in the subject areas of the courses they teach. These regulations apply to offsite as well as regular high school programs.

These regulations impacted significantly on the summer program offered through ASHS, which had not, prior to this year, been under the administrative umbrella of the Office of Summer and Evening High Schools, and consequently was not in compliance with these regulations. For example, their classes were not, in the past, offered in multiples of 90-minute time periods. Moreover, they frequently offered a combined class that covered all basic skills subject areas. The Principal of Summer and Evening High Schools described the director of ASHS as conscientious and interested in reorganizing the program to comply with the regulations. While class sessions were scheduled for multiples of 90 minute periods, the 1989 summer program continued to offer combined basic skills courses, and consequently, did not meet the requirement that all subject material be offered by a teacher licensed in that area.

The Principal of Summer and Evening High Schools oversees summer school by assigning a site supervisor to each regular high school site. The role of the site supervisor is both to assume responsibilities for administrative matters, (e.g. determining whether a class is eligible for P.C.E.N. funds) and to address substantive problems related to curriculum, staff development,

etc. Special sub-programs, such as Summer I.C.E., frequently have program coordinators who report to the site supervisors.

Three kinds of supervisors oversee offsite programs during the summer. Area supervisors oversee sites grouped on the basis of geographic location. They are sent from either the superintendent's office or the Office of Summer and Evening High Schools, but always report to the latter. They, like the site supervisors in regular high school, are the people who address the range of administrative curricular and other problems that arise. Subject supervisors have a more specific role of overseeing the curriculum in a particular subject area. They prepare the schedule of exams, determine the rate at which the curriculum proceeds, etc. Special program supervisors head individual programs at particular sites. They are located at the site, should know each teacher, chair meetings, etc. At some sites, (e.g., some of the ASHS sites), where the program is operating with a small number of students, only area supervisors are assigned.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

P.C.E.N. funds were used for reduced-size English, mathematics and E.S.L. courses, and for courses that prepared students for R.C.T.s in mathematics, reading and writing. Among the sites visited by OREA, funded classes comprised, on the average, approximately 35 percent of the courses at the regular high schools, and 100 percent of courses offered through offsite

programs.*

Supervisors' Perceptions

Supervisors, for the most part, reported that they were unaware of any curricular changes resulting from P.C.E.N. funding. Although most classes in summer school have low enrollments, those funded by P.C.E.N. were even smaller. Supervisors felt that students were often surprised by the fast pace at which they must learn the material (double the pace in the regular school year), and that consequently many dropped out. The students who remained tended to be more motivated than those in comparable classes during the regular school year.

Supervisors and teachers consistently reported that there were fewer behavior problems in summer school than during the school year. They felt that higher motivation level and lower frequency of behavior problems are at least partially attributable to the fact that summer school is not mandatory.

Supervisors' responses were uneven in terms of support services. The supervisor at Grover Cleveland High School said that there was only one guidance counselor for all the summer students (a poorer ratio than during the regular school year); there was no guidance counselor available for students at the Roberto Clemente Learning Center. In contrast, the supervisor at the Bedford-Stuyvesant Outreach Center said that the number of

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*Most of the offsite programs (including all that were site visited) either offer only basic skills during the summer, or offer other specialized course, such as job training, at other sites.

students assigned to a guidance counselor was fewer than during the regular school year. At Promesa O.E.S. the support staff included two vocational counselors and two social workers; this is the same as what is available during the regular school year.

The supervisor at Boys and Girls High School felt that changes in funding did not keep up with the increased amount of remediation that the schools were required to provide. As an example, she cited the fact that they now administer Science R.C.T.s for which the schools must provide preparatory courses, yet Science R.C.T. preparation courses are not eligible for P.C.E.N. funds.

Teachers' Perceptions

In addition to their assertion that there are fewer behavior problems in the summer, teachers consistently reported that summer students were more motivated, more diligent and had better basic skills. Moreover, all teachers reported that the small class size enabled a very different mode of instruction to take place. They were able to offer more individualized instruction, and to be more innovative in developing activities to enhance the curriculum. Many said that they could tailor the activities to the interests of students in these small groups, and could conduct activities that encouraged and capitalized on student creativity. Some of these activities included puppetry, poetry reading, role playing and innovative writing exercises. They reported that they could develop a better understanding of and rapport with the students. All felt that the students were in

need of these enrichments that resulted from the reduced class size. The only negative comment came from a teacher at Brandeis High School who felt that the curriculum was too dense, and proceeded at a much too rapid pace for the students.

Classroom Observations

Classroom observations conducted by OREA evaluators were consistent with the survey responses of teachers. Evaluators reported that students were, for the most part, interested and participatory in classroom activities. Teachers frequently made attempts to engage students who were not participating. Both group and individualized instruction were used. One teacher showed a film. At Boys and Girls High School the math teacher used a hypothetical baseball game to teach probability, ran a classroom version of Jeopardy to review math skills and, in general, made a serious and successful effort to engage students.

III. STUDENT OUTCOMES

In 1989, the P.C.E.N. Summer Remediation Program served 12,785 students in 880 classes in the regular high schools and additional students at 73 offsite facilities. Funded classes included basic skills courses comprised solely of students who were repeating a course, E.S.L. courses, and R.C.T. preparation courses in reading, writing and mathematics. This constituted a considerably broader range of educational programs than was funded during the previous year.

COURSE GRADES

The course grades objective of this program was that 50 percent of all students completing the summer school program pass at least one course in which they were enrolled. Table 1 presents the number and percent of students passing one, two, and three courses. As shown in this table, of the 12,785 students who were enrolled in P.C.E.N.-funded courses, 8,047* (63 percent) passed at least one course, thus surpassing the evaluation objective.

R.C.T.S

The R.C.T. objective stated that 50 percent of all students taking an R.C.T. will pass the examination. As Table 2 illustrates, of the 415 R.C.T. scores reported in reading, writing or mathematics, 207 (50 percent) were passing grades,

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*If courses for which students received a grade of "NC" are eliminated, then the percent of students passing at least one course is 59. This more conservative figure exceeds the objective as well.

Table 1

Number of Courses Passed by Students in P.C.E.N.-Funded Courses
Summer, 1989

Courses Taken	Courses Passed								
	Zero		One		Two		Three		
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	Total
One	4,287	39	6,698	61	---	--	---	--	10,985
Two	448	25	507	29	812	46	---	--	1,767
Three	3	9	8	24	21	64	1	3	33
Total	4,738		7,213		833		1		12,785

- Of 12,785 students enrolled in summer school courses, 8,047 (63 percent) passed at least one course.

Table 2

Number and Percent of Students Passing R.C.T.s

	R.C.T.			
	Reading	Writing	Math	Total
Number of Students Taking Test	221	124	66	415
Number Passing Test	93	87	27	207
Percent Passing	42	70	41	50

- Fifty percent of the students taking an R.C.T. passed the exam, thus meeting the program objective.

thus meeting the program objective. It should be noted, however, that the scores for the writing R.C.T., taken at the end of the summer session and graded by the State Education Department, were not transmitted to OREA until spring 1990, nearly one year after students completed the exam.

IV. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The P.C.E.N. Summer Remediation Program provided funding for 12,785 (19 percent) of the 60,958 students who attended summer school at regular high schools in 1989. The program funded 14,618 places occupied by these students. In addition, an unspecified number of students at 73 offsite facilities attended funded courses.

English and mathematics courses for students who had previously failed the course, E.S.L. classes, and math and English R.C.T. preparation courses were funded at both regular high schools and offsite facilities. This constituted a major expansion of the range of funded programs from the previous year. Changes in administrative procedures for designating funded classes brought the program into closer compliance with State regulations, and resulted in an increase in the total dollars applied to the program.

The program met or exceeded each of its objectives. Sixty-three percent of students enrolled in P.C.E.N.-funded courses passed at least one course, and 50 percent of students taking an R.C.T. passed the exam. Fewer than 50 percent passed the reading and math R.C.T.s, but 70 percent passed the writing R.C.T. Future efforts should focus on raising the percentage of students who pass the reading and math R.C.T.s. It is noteworthy, however, that these data constitute an improvement over last year, when 26 percent passed the reading R.C.T. and 37 percent passed the math R.C.T.

It is the responsibility of the State Education Department to score the writing R.C.T.s, and these scores have not been reported in a timely fashion. This may have caused many students to retake the exam unnecessarily, and has hindered OREA's ability to fully evaluate this program.

Programs at the regular high schools were implemented in accordance with the stated purposes of the program, in that teachers did indeed offer intensified and individualized instruction. The students served by the program tended to comprise the more motivated and diligent ones among those eligible for funding. This unintentional selection bias is a consequence of the nature of summer school in general, in that it is not mandatory, and the curriculum proceeds at a rapid pace.

Programs at offsite facilities, for the first time, benefited from the P.C.E.N. Summer Remediation Program. Moreover, the Office of Summer and Evening High Schools has made significant progress in bringing these programs into compliance with State guidelines with regard to curriculum, scheduling, etc. The impact of this new area of funding appeared positive on the basis of evaluations by site visitors, but quantitative data describing the outcomes for students in funded classes at offsite facilities are not collected separately by the Office of Summer and Evening High Schools. Thus, the extent to which this component of the program is meeting the overall program objectives cannot be assessed.

The program did not fund R.C.T. preparation courses in

science and social studies. Supervisors at some of the high schools raised the question of why this is the case. They argue that requiring R.C.T.s in science and social studies implies that the definition of basic skills has changed, and that these courses should therefore be viewed as basic skills courses, and eligible for funding.

On the basis of this evaluation OREA offers the following recommendations:

- Quantitative data on courses passed and R.C.T. scores for students attending funded classes at offsite facilities should be compiled separately and included in future program evaluations;
- Program planners should pursue the argument that R.C.T. preparation classes in science and social studies be considered basic skills classes, and thus eligible for P.C.E.N. funding;
- Special attention should be focused on increasing the percentage of students who pass R.C.T.s in reading and mathematics;
- The Division of High Schools should work with the State Education Department to facilitate the reporting of writing R.C.T. scores; and
- Ideas about how to address the needs of students who cannot benefit from the program because of the rapid pace of the summer curriculum should be explored.